

FY22 CM Pool Budget Amendment #3

Staffing for Aerial Apparatus at Moore's Crossing EMS/Fire Station

SD23: Safety

Filling the Staffing Gap at Moore's Crossing Station:

In FY20, Council approved an additional aerial ladder for the new Moore's Crossing EMS/Fire Station in District 2, which was scheduled to be occupied in July 2020. AFD deficit issues that were discovered earlier in the FY20 budget cycle resulted in a delay of this staffing until FY21. However, staffing for Moore's Crossing aerial ladder was not included last year in the FY21 proposed budget, and has not been included in the proposed FY 2022 either.

This budget adjustment would address the staffing gap and provide maintenance funds for the aerial ladder.

Austin Fire Department (AFD) aerial apparatus and engine companies are the two primary tactical assets deployed to an emergency scene to mitigate threats to life and property. For an emergency response to achieve a positive outcome, an adequate number of aerials and engines need to assemble rapidly to achieve an effective firefighting force, as defined in [NFPA 1710³](#) and AFD policy.

Aerial Staffing for Community Safety

- In May 2020 (& April 2021) the Public Safety Commission submitted budget recommendations to Council, including "that the Austin City Council approve the Austin Fire Department budget **including the additional FTEs for placing an additional aerial into service.**"⁴
- Austin has seen significant growth in recent decades, with a population increase of over 30% since 1995. In that time, it has increased its number of engines from 31 to 48, but the number of aerial ladders is staffs has not changed.
- Austin continues to see a rapid increase in the number of mid rises and high-rises that need to be served by an aerial ladder. The City now has 229 high-rise and 550 mid-rise building either built or in the planning stages for construction.
- Aerial ladder response times to fire emergencies in Austin are below the national standard, demonstrating the need for additional aerial ladder capacity.⁵
- Austin has the lowest fire engine to aerial ladder ratio among major Texas Cities. Refer to **Table 2**.

Table 1. Funding for 16 Additional Aerial Staff¹

Aerial Staff	FY22 Funding
Salary Costs	\$1,571,000
Maintenance Costs	\$73,000
Total	\$1,644,000

Table 2. Engine to Ladder Ratios²

Texas Cities	Total Aerials	Total Engines	Engine/Aerial Ratio
Austin (current)	13	48	3.69
Houston	37	96	2.59
San Antonio	21	54	2.57
Dallas	23	57	2.48
El Paso	14	31	2.22
Fort Worth	17	38	2.22

¹ Austin Fire Department

² Austin Fire Department, [Aerial Ladder Response Data](#)

³ [National Fire Protection Association](#)

⁴ Public Safety Commission [20200518-002](#) & [20200518-005 – Part 2](#)

⁵ International Association of Fire Firefighters Local 975